

Chapter I

History of Planning and Development

A CHRONOLOGY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PERTAINING TO LINCOLN AND LANCASTER COUNTY

- 950- Native Americans, ancestors of the Pawnee and Otoe peoples, develop an earthlodge village on
1350 Salt Creek south of present-day Lincoln. The "Schrader Site" is now recognized on the National Register of Historic Sites as a late prehistoric settlement.
- 1300- The Pawnee and the Otoe peoples are transient visitors in the area of present-day Lancaster
1800s County for hunting and perhaps salt gathering, and they probably develop occasional small settlements.
- 1785 "Ordinance of 1785" establishes the rectangular land survey system in United States.
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase adds area of future State of Nebraska to U.S.A.
- 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act establishes the Nebraska Territory including present-day Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and much of Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.
- 1855 Lancaster County is established by territorial legislature.
- 1856 First European-American settles in Lancaster County.
- 1859 Lancaster County is organized.
- 1863 Town of Lancaster is platted on 240 acres east of Salt Creek. The grid-pattern town consists of 12 streets east-west by eight streets north-south, generally encompassing the present area from O to Vine Streets and 5th to 16th Streets.
- Clay County is dissolved and the southern half is attached to Lancaster County, increasing the county to its present size of 24 miles east-west by 36 miles north-south (864 square miles).
- 1867 Nebraska becomes a state; Lancaster is selected as the site for the capital city. The Lancaster plat is vacated and a new plat for Lincoln is created. The grid plan includes 4-block reservations for the Capitol, a city park (now Cooper Park), and the University; plus single blocks for a county courthouse, market square, library/historical society, high school, and five common schools. Two hundred and forty-five blocks provide roughly 3,000 house lots, plus narrower commercial lots along 9th and O Streets. Ordinary street right-of-ways are set at a generous 100 feet, with an extra 20 feet provided on 9th, 11th, 15th, J, O and other special streets.
- Tenement house law enacted in New York City and ordinance restricting placement of slaughter houses in San Francisco set stage for future zoning legislation.
- 1870 First railroad (Burlington & Missouri River Railroad) reaches Lincoln. Lincoln population grows to 2,500. Substantial subdivisions are added (but not yet annexed) to south and east.
- 1880s Lincoln experiences rapid growth, from 13,000 at beginning of decade to nearly 55,000 residents in 1890. City limits expand in all directions except northwest, extending basic grid of original plat.

- 887 Six-story Burr Block is built at 12th & O Streets, Lincoln's first "skyscraper."
- Street car lines begin to link the City to surrounding areas, with Downtown as hub.
- 1889 "Grandview Heights" north of city is platted with gently curving streets, large lots, and separation from city--"suburban" innovations developed by Olmstead and Vaux at Riverside near Chicago in 1869 and copied throughout U.S. Grandview never developed as "garden suburb," but the ideals it embodied still influence residential subdivisions.
- 1890s Beginning in late '80s, several colleges are founded on outskirts of Lincoln, with separate towns forming around them in University Place, Bethany Heights, and College View. Location of large Burlington Railroad shop northeast of city gives rise to Havelock. Street car lines link the towns to Lincoln.
- A few rowhouses are built between the Capitol and the County Courthouse--an experiment in denser, more urban housing forms in the growing city. (Two landmark examples, the Barr and the Lyman Terraces, still stand at 11th & H Streets.)
- 1893 Economic panic sweeps U.S.; Lincoln and Lancaster County are hard hit.
- 1900 Lincoln population 40,000--decline of more than 25% from 1890.
- Women of Lincoln's City Improvement Society advocate for and contribute to initial improvements of the city park created in original plat (now Cooper Park).
- 1901 New law is enacted in NYC in effort to reform the tenements of the city, requiring building permits on construction, alteration, and conversion; wide light and air courts between structures; toilets and running water in each apartment. Becomes model for tenement laws throughout the U.S.
- 1904 Lincoln adopts building permit system, following intermittent efforts at building regulation in late 1880s.
- 1905 Park Commission is formed; city begins acquiring park land, especially along Antelope Creek.
- 1907 Peak year for immigration into U.S.--1,285,000 people in one year.
- 1909 1st national planning conference is held in Washington, D.C. Wisconsin adopts the first state enabling act for planning.
- Sheridan Place is platted, including curved boulevard from South St. to Lake St.--modest departure from prevailing grid.
- 1910 One quarter of Lincoln's population of 44,000 is foreign-born, with 22% of those immigrants from Germany and 30% from Russia (most of whom were ethnic Germans).
- 1910s Woods Bros., Harvey Rathbone, and other residential developers in Lincoln begin inserting covenants in deeds regulating setback, land use, and minimum cost of construction.
- 1912 Municipal Plan Commission secures a plan for Lincoln, which is not adopted. Commission dies out a short time later.
- 1913 In New Jersey, 1st mandatory subdivision review and control is adopted.

- 1915-1917 First major boom in apartment construction in Lincoln (24 buildings, nearly 300 units).
- 1916 First comprehensive zoning code in U.S. is adopted in New York City.
- Woods Bros. employ Jens Jensen, noted landscape architect from Chicago, to design layout and planting scheme for Woodscrest Addition--a continuation of Sheridan Blvd. and a radical departure from the grid. Harvey Rathbone plats Sheridan Park same year, including Sheridan, Manse, Stratford, Bradfield--curvilinear streets, responsive to topography, without alleys. Plain grid for major residential subdivisions becomes outmoded.
- 1917 9th annual planning conference is held in Kansas City, 2,000 persons attend.
- 1922 "Country Club Plaza" in Kansas City, Mo. is developed as first suburban, auto-oriented shopping center.
- Chamber of Commerce sponsors draft zoning ordinance for Lincoln, prepared by Technical Advisory Corporation of New York. In absence of formal Planning Commission, Chamber serves for many years as a key promoter of Lincoln planning and zoning.
- 1923 A Chamber publication states: "Lincoln is more fortunate than most cities in having been originally laid out according to a definite plan....The present zoning plan is an effort to introduce a modern and up-to-date plan, based on the knowledge gained by competent City Planning Engineers. Zoning is the first step toward the creation of a city plan. It makes it possible to locate for, at least twenty-five years to come, such things as factories, retail and wholesale districts, schools, play grounds, parks, parkways, thoroughfares, street car lines, public institutions and utilities."
- 1924 Zoning ordinance is adopted in Lincoln prohibiting commercial and industrial uses in residential districts.
- 1925 Cincinnati Planning Commission adopts first comprehensive plan.
- Ernst Herminghaus, Nebraska's first trained landscape architect, designs Woodsshire Addition for Woods Bros. as semi-private "residential park," with strong landscape design including planted circles at intersections, no alleys or sidewalks, and private neighborhood park aligned for view of yet-to-be-built Capitol tower.
- 1926 U. S. Supreme Court validates comprehensive zoning in Euclid vs. Ambler.
- Enforcement begins of Lincoln zoning code.
- 1926-1930 Lincoln annexes surrounding college towns of University Place, Bethany, and College View, and industrial Havelock. According to a national zoning textbook published in 1929, Lincoln followed a prudent plan of automatically zoning all newly annexed land as residential.
- Busses begin replacing street cars through Lincoln.
- 1927 Progress in construction of new State Capitol prompts formation of city-state Capitol Environs Committee.
- 1928 A large country tract beyond the city limits is donated to city as Pioneers Park; Ernst Herminghaus designs a "Beaux Arts" landscape scheme emphasizing vistas of the Capitol.
- 1929 Lincoln is granted zoning jurisdiction three miles beyond corporate limits.

1994 LINCOLN CITY-LANCASTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- 1930s Park improvements constitute a major part of the locally and federally sponsored effort to relieve unemployment, including development of Pioneers Park, Sunken Garden, Antelope Park and Zoo.
- 1933 National Planning Board is founded, encouraged 20 year comprehensive plans for cities.
- 1937 Second Capitol Environs Committee is formed.
- 1942 Lancaster County adopts first zoning regulations.
- 1945 Last street car line, Sheridan Blvd. line to College View, is shut down.
- 1946 Shurtleff's Piedmont Park is platted as 1st cul-de-sac development in Lincoln.
- 1948 First Planning Commission is appointed; first city park study and plan.
- 1948-1952 First Lincoln Comprehensive Plan (Figure 1) is developed by Harlan Bartholomew consultants; their Lincoln representative is hired as the first Lincoln planning director. Adopted plan includes recommendations for Downtown renovation and a new northeast radial road connecting Downtown and northeast Lincoln.
- 1953 Revised zoning ordinance and map are adopted; subdivision control is adopted but not enforced until clarification in state enabling legislation in 1956.
- 1957 First Community Unit Plan (CUP)--Meadowlane--is approved in accord with 1953 ordinance. First CUP to include mix of single-family houses, townhouses, and apartments was Wellington Green in 1966.
- 1959 Joint City-County Planning Commission is formed.
- 1960 Gateway Mall opens four miles east of Downtown.
- 1961 Regional (City-County) Comprehensive Plan (Figures 2 and 3) is adopted.
- 1962 First Lincoln Center (Downtown) Plan is developed through private support.
- 1963 County subdivision regulations adopted.
- 1964 Revised zoning ordinance and map are adopted.
- 1966 Second park study; first Metropolitan Transportation Study.
- 1967 County adopts coordinated zoning code and map, backed by Comprehensive Plan.
- Lancaster County appropriates \$400,000 for acquisition of Wilderness Park along Salt Creek, assisted by City, HUD grant, and Watershed District.
- 1968 City begins purchasing land for northeast radial (through 1974).
- 1970 Goals and Policies Committee inaugurated to formalize citizen participation in comprehensive planning.
- 1972 Highway 2 bicycle/pedestrian trail is included in study for road improvement project.
- 1974 In development since the 1950s, Interstate 80 is finally finished across Nebraska.

- 1975 Lincoln Center Plan is developed for retail revitalization; O Street beautification project is undertaken.
- 1976 *The Nebraska Capitol and Environs Plan* is published by UN-L.
- 1977 Third Comprehensive Plan (Figures 4 and 5) is adopted.
- By this date all incorporated cities and villages in Lancaster County had plans, zoning/subdivision adopted. (Amendment 9416)
- 1978 Billy Wolff Bike Trail along Antelope Creek is developed as a Bikeway Demonstration Project.
- 1979 Revised city and county zoning are adopted; this is the zoning Grandfather date for existing lots. (Amendment 9416)
- Public/private effort develops Centrum (Downtown enclosed retail mall).
- Commonwealth Savings Company fails, harming thousands of depositors and tangling ownership of major tracts of Lincoln real estate.
- Northeast Radial Reuse Task Force created.
- 1980 Historic preservation ordinance is adopted and program begins.
- State subdivision code changed from 5 to 10 acres. (Amendment 9416)
- 1981 Lincoln electorate votes not to build northeast radial roadway.
- 1981- Designation of historic landmarks and landmark districts begins. First residential district--Mount
1982 Emerald Landmark District in Near South neighborhood, first commercial--Haymarket Landmark District Downtown.
- 1983 Lincoln City, Lancaster County hires its second planning director.
- 1983- City Council adopts Redevelopment Plans for Radial Area, including bike trail, housing
1984 revitalization, separation of residential and industrial uses.
- 1984 Cornhusker Hotel/Convention Center is developed.
- Theater policy and standards are adopted, reinforcing continued concentration of movie theaters Downtown.
- Redevelopment plan for mixed-use historic district is adopted for Haymarket warehouse district.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance is adopted, Village Inn at 50th and Van Dorn is first project approved under ordinance.
- 1985 Updated Comprehensive Plan (Figures 6 and 7) is adopted.
- Updated Lincoln Center Plan is adopted recommending large Downtown mall. \$12 million bond issue is approved to assist project.
- 1985- Four years of concerted effort with two successive developers fail to secure large Downtown
1989 redevelopment project.
- 1987 County Commissioners established criteria for AGR zone changes. (Amendment 9416)
- 1988 Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission is formed with city and state representation.

1994 LINCOLN CITY-LANCASTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1989 City/County adopts a 4 year long process and procedure for the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategic planning process issues "A Blueprint for Action" on Downtown, emphasizing coordination of smaller redevelopment efforts to maintain Downtown as a vital, mixed use center. Based on this proposal, Downtown Master Plan is adopted.

1990 Last Downtown department store closes.

"A Place Downtown," a study and plan for downtown housing, is adopted and appended to the Comprehensive Plan. (Update in 1994 finds progress, continued opportunities.)

Goals and Policies Committee is replaced with Community Congress as citizen participation forum for developing goals and policies for Comprehensive Plan update.

City Council amends Comprehensive Plan to permit large expansion of the Gateway Center and of the retail sites at 27th and Superior St. and 27th and Pine Lake Road.

1991 "Working Goals Statement" containing more than 150 different goals, but no common statement of vision is adopted by the City Council and County Board.

Lincoln City, Lancaster County hires its third planning director.

1992 "A Plan in Transition" adopted during Comprehensive Plan Annual Review.

Task Forces report on five key issues for Comprehensive Plan update.

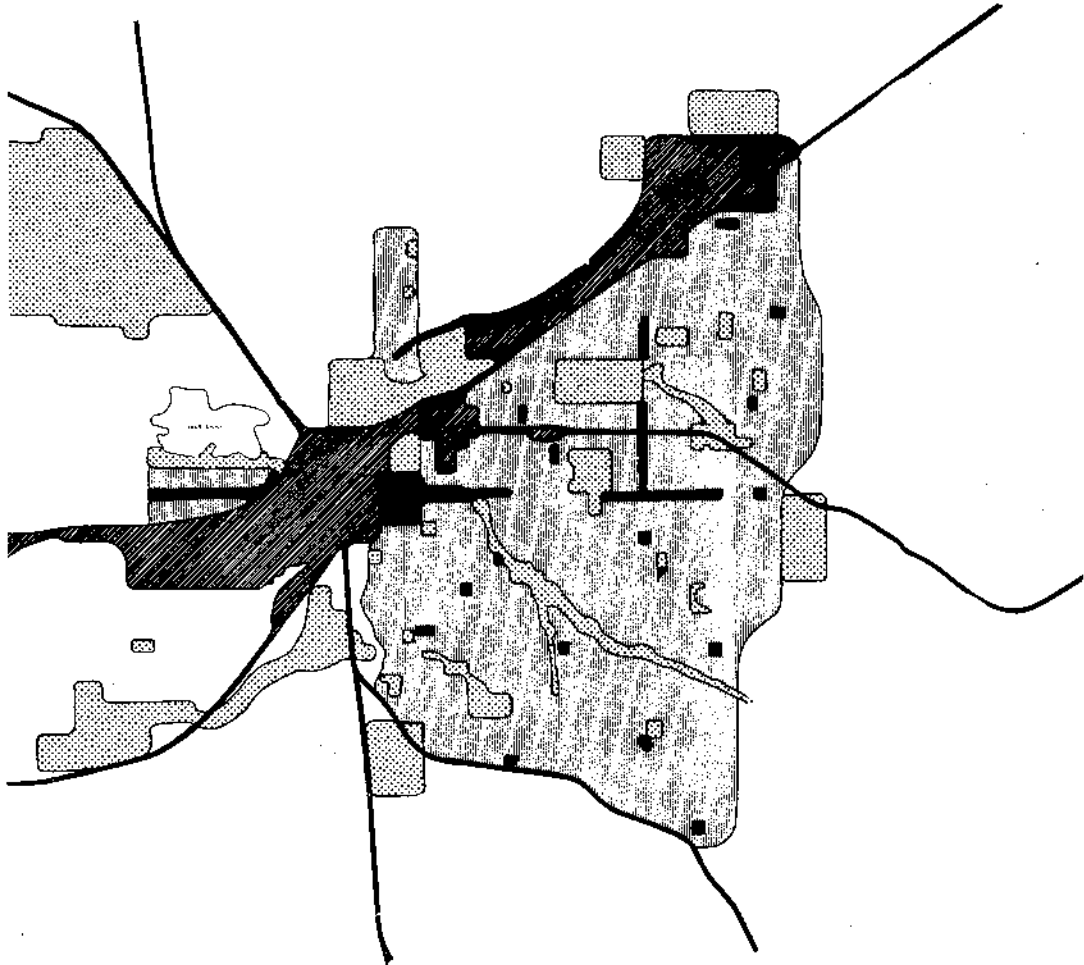
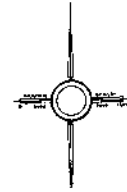
1993 City Council approves a series of Downtown initiatives using 1985 bond funds including parking structures, an expanded convention facility, a childcare center, and a skywalk across "O" Street.

Proposed Comprehensive Plan undergoes extensive review by the community and Planning Commission. Commission recommends that the proposed plan not be approved and defers action so that the proposal, together with specific recommendations for amendments and additions made by the Planning Commission, can be referred to a review team for additional revision, and that the resulting revised proposal be rescheduled before the Planning Commission for public hearing and final action.

1994 Updated Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

**1952 Comprehensive Plan
Lincoln Future (1975) Land Use Plan
Figure 1**

CITY OF LINCOLN
AND ENVIRONS
NEBRASKA



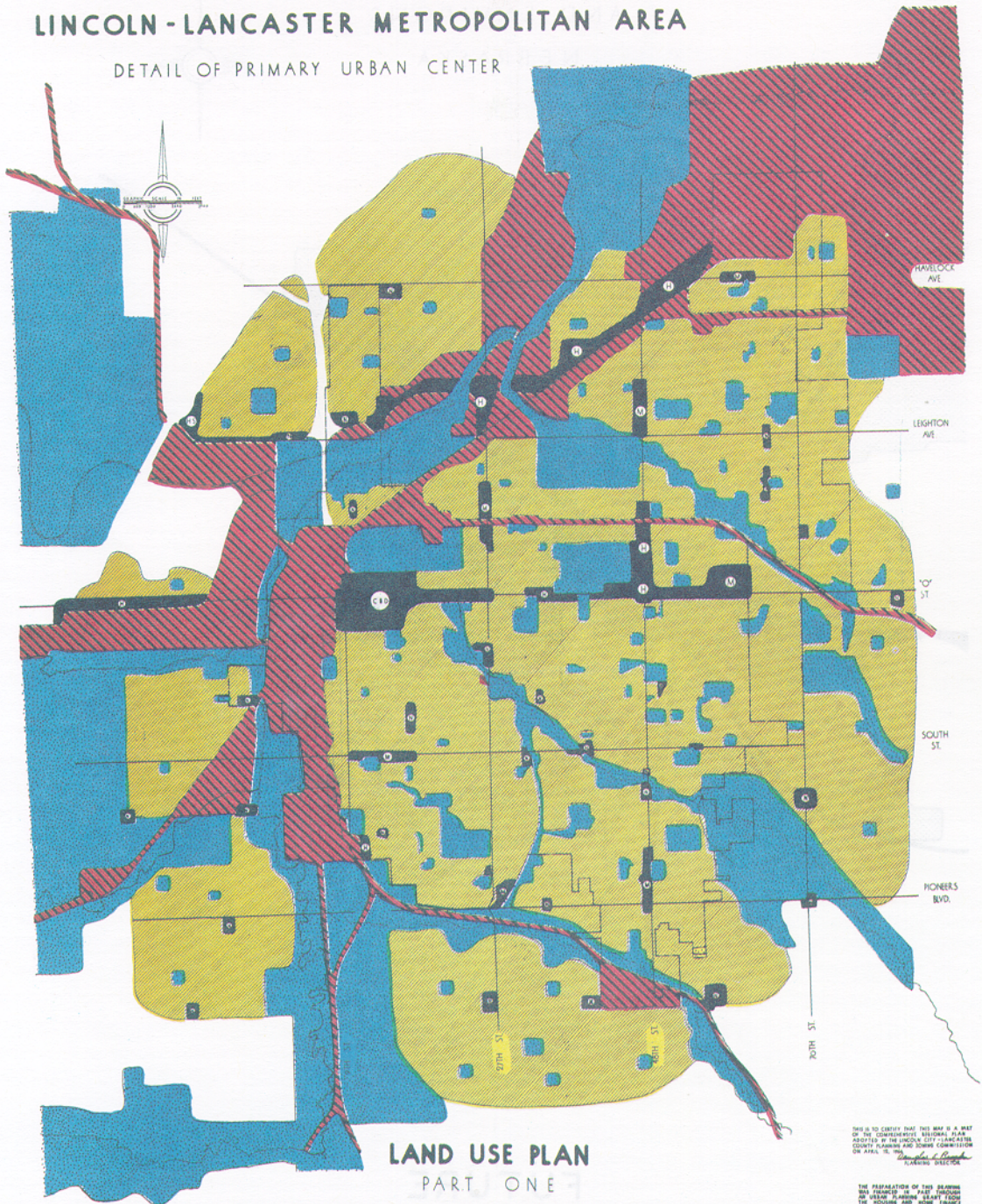
**FUTURE
DIAGRAMMATIC LAND USE**

L	E	G	E	N	D
	RESIDENTIAL		PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC		
	COMMERCIAL		INDUSTRIAL & RAILROADS		

1961 Comprehensive Plan Lincoln Future (1980) Land Use Plan Figure 2

LINCOLN-LANCASTER METROPOLITAN AREA

DETAIL OF PRIMARY URBAN CENTER



LAND USE PLAN PART ONE

NOTE: STREETS ARE FOR GRAPHIC REFERENCE ONLY

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| RESIDENTIAL | INDUSTRIAL & RAILROAD |
| COMMERCIAL | PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC |
| REGIONAL CENTER | MAJOR CENTERS |
| NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER | HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL |
| HIGHWAY SERVICE | |

LINCOLN CITY - LANCASTER COUNTY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA



HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
CITY PLANNERS, CIVIL ENGINEERS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

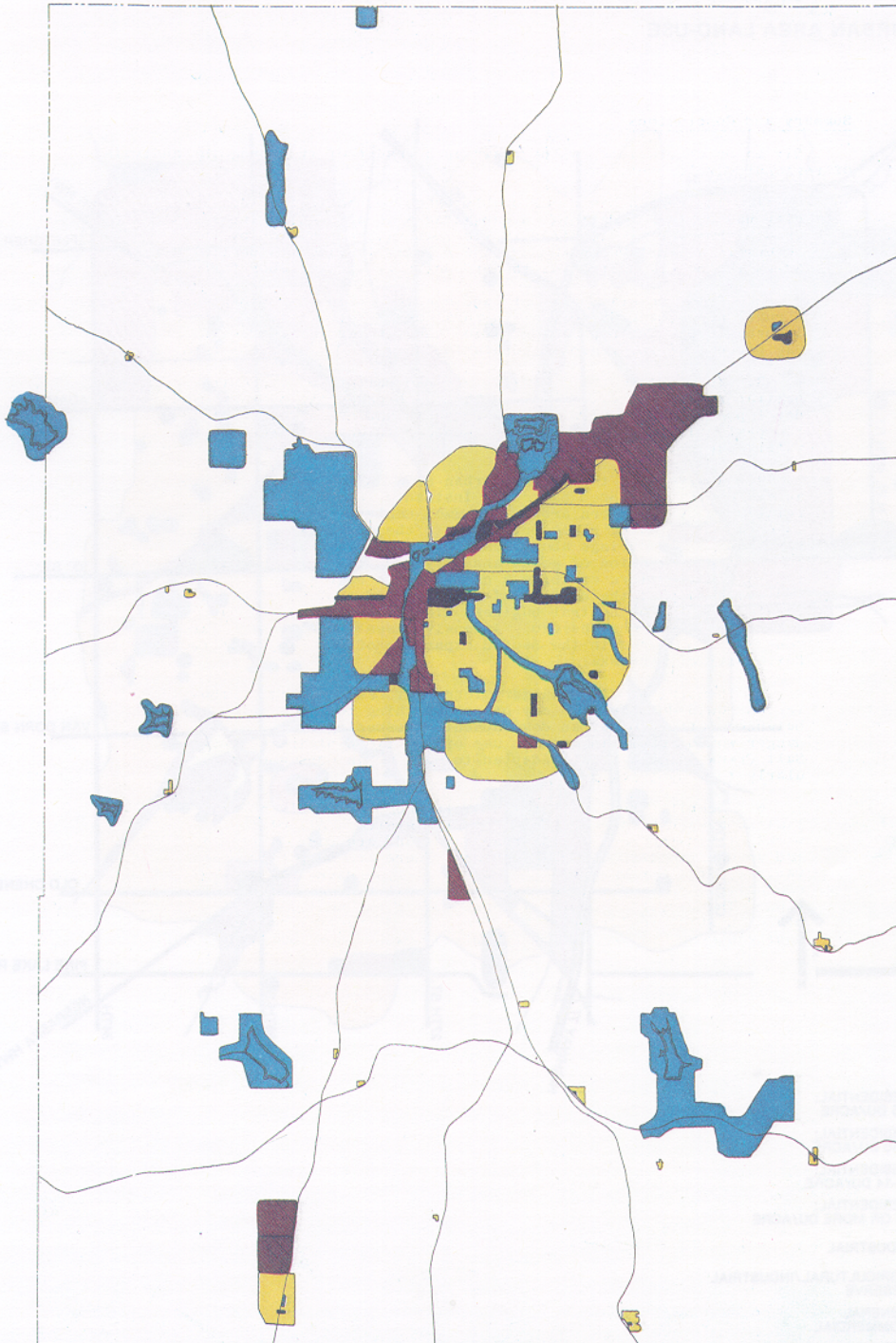
OCTOBER 1960

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS MAP IS A PART
OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL PLAN
ADOPTED BY THE LINCOLN CITY - LANCASTER
COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
ON APRIL 15, 1960.
PLANNING COMMISSION

THE PREPARATION OF THIS PLANNING
AND ZONING MAP WAS A PART OF THE
REGIONAL PLANNING STUDY FROM
THE FUNDING AND PLANNING
AGENCY, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF
THE FEDERAL ACT
OF 1961, AS AMENDED.

1961 Comprehensive Plan Lancaster County Future (1980) Land Use Plan Figure 3

LINCOLN - LANCASTER METROPOLITAN AREA



LAND USE PLAN PART ONE

- L E G E N D
- | | |
|---|--|
| RESIDENTIAL | INDUSTRIAL & RAILROAD |
| COMMERCIAL | PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC |
| AGRICULTURE | RAILROADS |

LINCOLN CITY - LANCASTER COUNTY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA



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CITY PLANNERS, CIVIL ENGINEERS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS MAP IS A PART
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ADOPTED BY THE LINCOLN CITY-LANCASTER
COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
ON APRIL 15, 1961.

THE PREPARATION OF THIS REGIONAL
PLAN, ZONING MAP, AND
LAND-USE PLAN WAS
FINANCED BY THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF
SECTION 1704 OF THE HOUSING ACT
OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

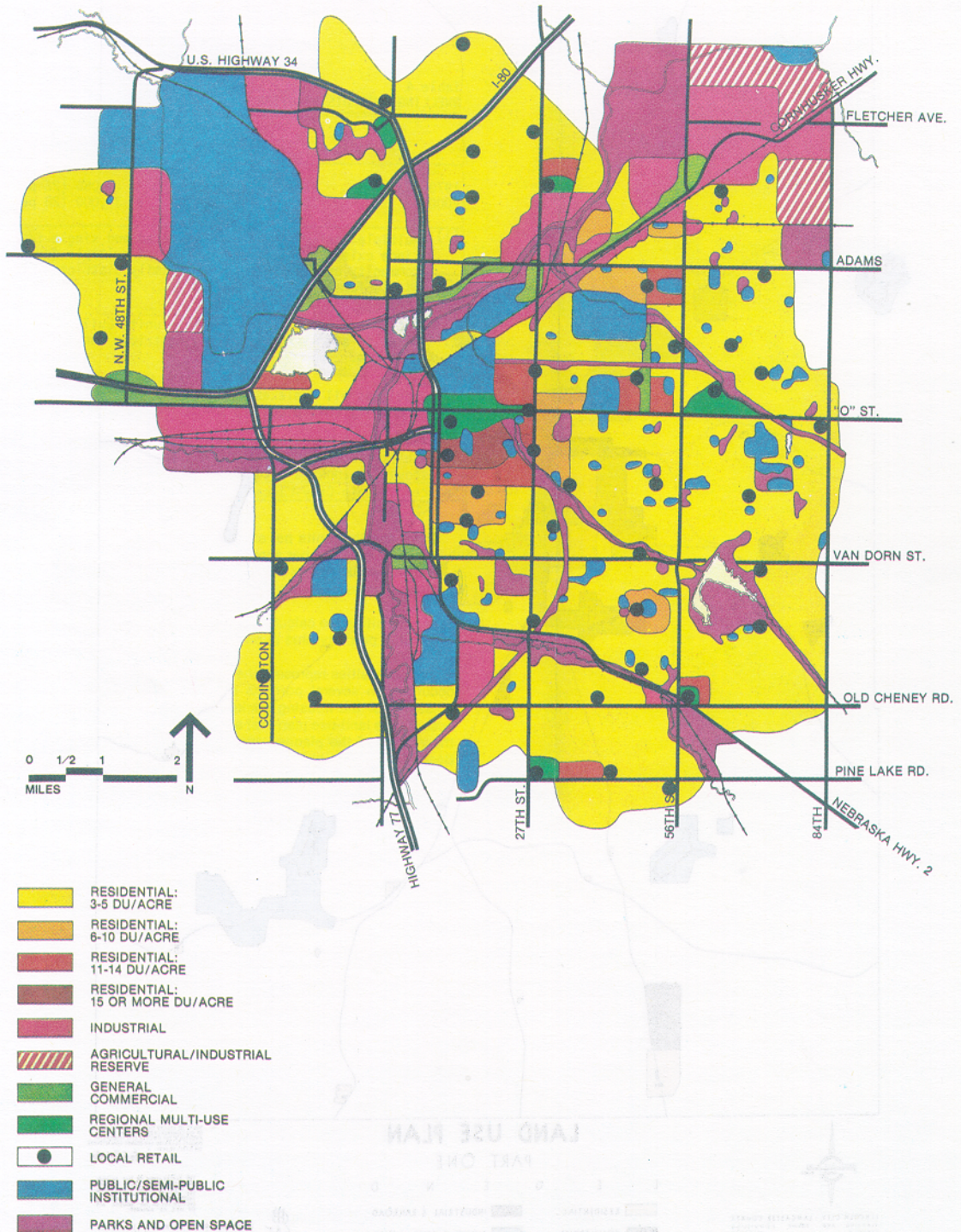
OCTOBER 1960

1977 Comprehensive Plan

Lincoln Future (2000) Land Use Plan

Figure 4

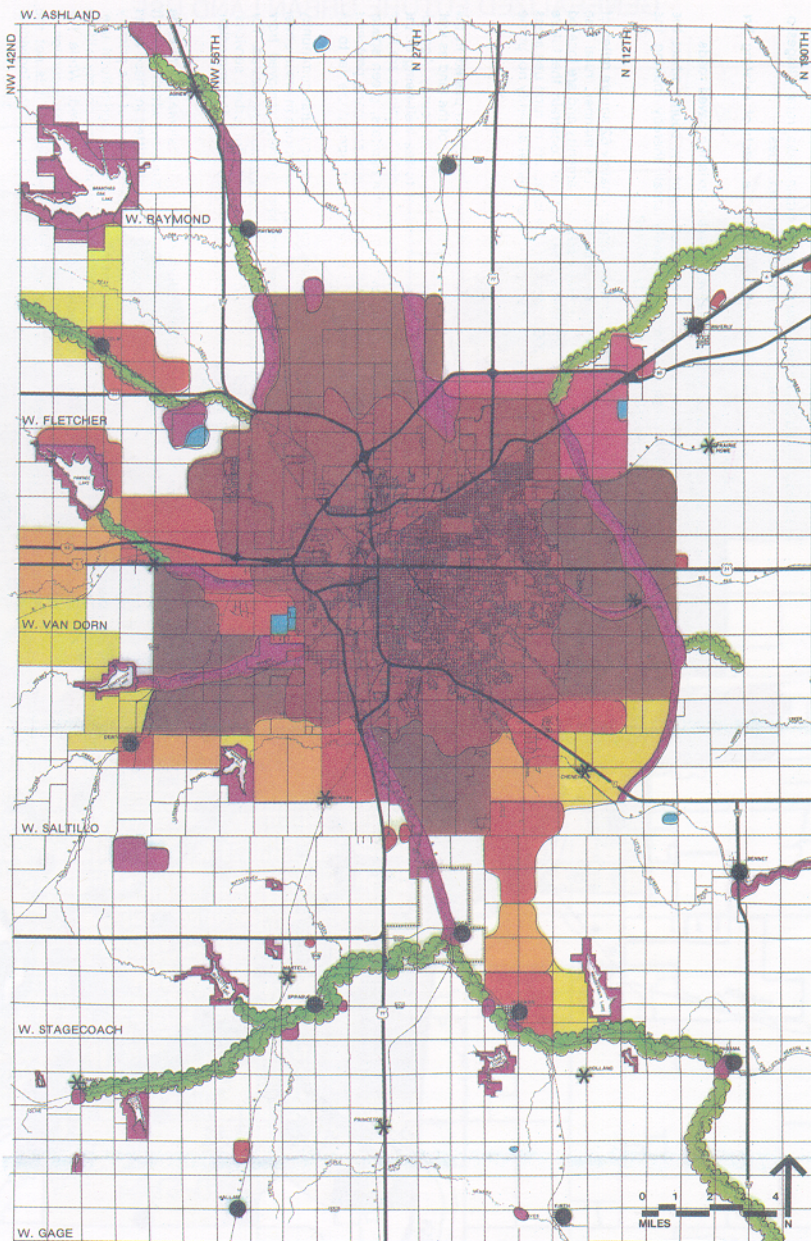
FUTURE URBAN AREA LAND-USE



1977 Comprehensive Plan

Lancaster County Future (2000) Land Use Plan

Figure 5



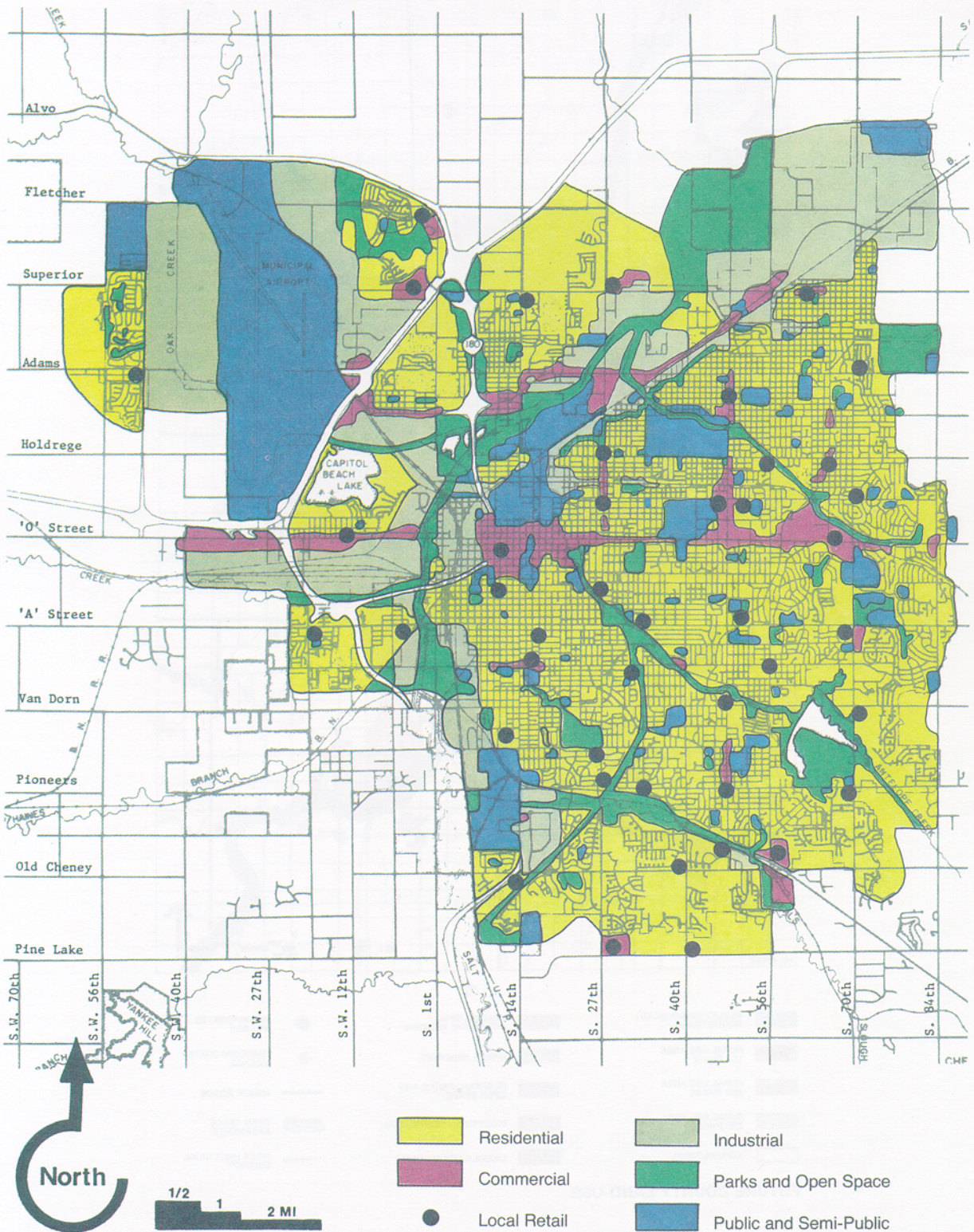
FUTURE COUNTY LAND-USE

1985 Comprehensive Plan

Lincoln Future (2005) Land Use Plan

Figure 6

GENERALIZED FUTURE URBAN LAND USE



1985 Comprehensive Plan

Lancaster County Future (2005) Land Use Plan

Figure 7

